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New Market Economy, the Institution of slavery, and the Expansion of Settlers out West

Introduction

In the early 19th century, America witnessed an economic revolution that is termed the market growth. The new changes witnessed epitomized an acceleration of new advances that had previously commenced during the colonial age. Specifically, southern farmers were already trading their slave labor products in global marketplace from early 17th century. This was happening during a period that the settlers were expanding out west. This paper aims to discuss the relationship between the new market economy, the institution of slavery, and the expansion of the settlers out west.

Growth in communication and transportation gave rise to the expansion of the settlers in the west. For instance, from 1790 to 1840, 4.5 million individuals traversed the Appalachian Mountains (Foner 643). This was a significant number that exceeded the entire population of the United States when Washington was inaugurated. The number that moved west was minimal during this period, and more frequently operated in groups to help each other clear bushes and settle on new areas. Notably, these individuals were comprised of small farmers and planters, who created the new cotton kingdom in Alabama, Mississippi, Arkansas, and into newly acquired territories in Louisiana.

One of the critical features of the westward expansion was the Louisiana Purchase in 1803. It involved the acquisition of ³828,000 square miles of acreage west of the Mississippi

River (Foner 632). The parcel was obtained from France. Additionally, the federal government canceled debts that France owed them after this purchase. This acquisition was significant as it expanded the country's territory. Besides, the westward expansion led to a boom in land investments. People bought land while speculating that rich farmers, who had slaves to work on their farms would buy from them land at higher prices. Unfortunately, the farmers who settled in Louisiana did not mind purchasing the farms at exorbitant prices because there was a huge demand for agricultural products, and they had the manpower to work on the farms. Moreover, A New York correspondent called John L.o'Sullivan coined a saying "Manifest Destiny" meaning America having divine mission to expand its territory. ¹ "Americans had a far better title to western lands than could be provided by the any international treaty, right or discovery, or long-term settlement." (Foner 669)

The initial years of 19th century gave rise to the "cotton kingdom" (Foner 643). The early industrialization era saw the growth of cotton processing industries. This led to an increase in demand for cotton because there was a new market for the finished products. As a result, the opening of new lands in the west and the rising demand for cotton American slavery witnessed a revolution. Whereas many Americans expected slavery to die because tobacco, which had exhausted soil was no longer viable to grow, the demand for cotton and the expansion of territory in South Carolina and upcountry enhanced slave work. After the 1812 war, the national regime was determined to solidify its influence over the expanded regions, hence pushing Indians to surrender fertile land. In turn, white supremacists moved into these areas together with their slaves and began cotton growing. Notably, the slave trade was well-organized with traders transporting and auctioning them for work in the cotton fields of Virginia, Maryland, and South Carolina. Besides that, by 1793, the United States was producing 5 million pounds of cotton for

export to the new markets. As cotton was produced exclusively for export in the local and overseas marketplaces, the south remained the most commercially oriented region in America. Yet instead of stimulating economic growth, the south expanded westward, hence reproducing the agrarian, slave-based societal order that was common in the older states. Foner describes an account of a British citizen who visited America in the 1840s and had a first-hand account of how slavery works. ² "Disgusting and hideous spectacle, a file of about two hundred slaves, manacled and chained together. "The slaves were marching from Virginia to Louisiana." (649)

Conclusion

Having discussed the relationship between the new market economy, the institution of slavery and the expansion of the settlers out west, it is clear that the new market economy increased the demand for goods at the local and international markets. Products that were mainly cotton based. However, the lands that were under tobacco for a long time were no longer fertile for cotton growing, hence the expansion of the settlers out west. These settlers settled on arable land that they used to grow cotton to meet the demands of the new industries by using slave labor, hence the relationship between the new market economy, the institution of slavery and the expansion of the settlers out west.

Work Cited

Foner, Eric. *Give Me Liberty!: An American History Seagull 6E Combined Vol: Seagull 1*

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